

Generally Sound Economy Forecast for Coming Year

By REYNOLDS KNIGHT
Economic forecasters are off and winging, as is their custom at this time of year. And while their predictions are for a generally sound economy in 1964, they're being careful not to fly as high and noisily as they did in 1960.

In that year the prognosticators seemed almost to be competing to determine who could paint the rosiest picture; then the economy slumped. While forecasts have since tended to carry more qualifications—and utterances about '64 have their share—it is generally felt that the coming year will be good but not spectacular.

Industrial production last week hit a record level, pumping fat wages into the millions of consumer pockets. The steel industry, which normally slows down with early snowfalls, has kept up a moderately brisk production pace and expects it to continue into next year's early months.

Construction is counted on to generate considerable economic steam early in '64. One estimate is for total building in the year to top the current record year by about five per cent—attaining \$85.5 billion.

However, one soft spot that could produce business downturns in localized areas is the apparent slow-down in spending for military base maintenance and some forms of military equipment. This may turn out to be the bugaboo of the '64 picture.

UNDERWATER 'MIKE'—The ability to detect sounds in the deepest parts of the ocean has been advanced significantly by the development of a stable, highly sensitive deep-water hydrophone. ACF Electronics, a division of ACF Industries, Incorporated, developed the device.

The cigar-shaped instrument, which functions as an underwater microphone, has operated successfully under the extreme hydraulic pressures prevailing at the ocean's greatest depth—37,000 feet, according to Ellis Zacharias Jr., ACF underwater chief in New York.

THE HYDROPHONE is intended for use in oceanographic research and submarine detection. In the case of the latter it may be used as a part of a shipboard sonar system, or on the ocean floor. In addition to defense applications, the new hydrophone, because of its deep-water operational suitability is expected to be of significant use in commercial, private and government oceanographic research.

Sound traveling through the water is received in the lower half of the 27-pound ACF hydrophone where a sensitive listening mechanism is located. This mechanism is protected from the sea-water by a rubber "boot" filled with castor oil, used because it has the same acoustical or sound transmission properties as water.

SALT FOR SAFETY—States, cities and counties are turning increasingly to rock salt for safety in snow and ice removal from highways, according to a report by Cargill, Inc., a major rock salt producer.

In 1962 some 3,000,000 tons of salt were used to clear roads of ice and snow. This was up 45 per cent from 2,127,000 tons used in 1961, according to the report. There was a 20 per

cent increase in this use for rock salt between 1953, when the volume was 1 million tons, and 1963.

Cargill experts cite a number of reasons for the growth: (1) a wider recognition by public officials of the added safety made possible by snow and ice removal salt; (2) more highway

construction, and (3) the economical advantages rock salt has over other melting agents.

They confidently predict continued growth of the business as the nation's increasingly heavy traffic load requires more and wider highways, such as those rapidly being completed.

THINGS TO COME—A Connecticut novelty firm is offering a cigarette box that has an automatically timed clock to help the user space out his use of cigarettes; the time interval can be set at intervals ranging from 10 minutes to 2 hours.

An extra-small plumb and level tool kit that weighs only one pound is coming to market, said to be accurate to one-half of 1 degree.

'O TANNENBAUM'—By today, Christmas trees are nearly gone from U.S. homes. Few carolers, however, could probably guess the number of this year's "crop." A government

body puts the harvest at 44 million trees, valued at close to \$100 million. The crop is slightly larger than a year ago. About one-fourth of the entire 1964 supply was grown in states adjoining the Great Lakes, while the Far West was the second-largest supplier.

Oddly, both Alaska and Hawaii made significant contributions to the harvest, even though their output required ocean shipping to get to the continental states.

BITS O' BUSINESS—Chocolate products may be costlier in months ahead, with the world cocoa bean production for the current crop year expected to dip somewhat; in

Africa, output will be off about 5 per cent because of bad weather. Paper production will close out 1963 about 4 per cent over 1962 if final figures hold to the expected pattern.

An investment club, founded three years ago on a "Fridays the 13th" date, recently went out of business. Its losses on the investments it had made for its members: \$13,000.

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Industrial Safety Committee Topic

Cost of industrial accidents due to lifting injuries will be the topic of the Torrance Firemen's Safety Committee Friday at 9 a.m. in the Civil Defense Room of the basement at the city hall.

A film on the subject will be shown with a narrator explaining the significant points. The movie was prepared by the City of Los Angeles, according to T. E. Donovan, personnel director for Torrance.

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